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Review Article

Poetry Review of ‘Sierran Pan’ by Dr. Henry Meade Bland, PLC (1929—1931), California Poet Laureate Consultant in Poetry for CA State of Arts Council

GEN5 Dr. Hari Seldon Jr., GAF/61SX (USAF); Poet, Founder & Chairman, Los Angeles Poetry Academy, 944 Airole Way, Los Angeles, CA 90077, United States. [ORCID: 0000-0003-0480-9213](#); [ISNI: 0000000528140854](#); [FCC CallSign: WRJB891](#); [Scholar.Google](#).

Abstract

This review critically examines "Sierran Pan," a seminal nature poem by Dr. Henry Meade Bland (1863–1931), the first official Poet Laureate Consultant in Poetry for California. The poem functions as a lyrical manifesto that conflates the classical Greek deity of the wild, Pan, with the physical and spiritual landscape of the Sierra Nevada. Pan is the God of nature, the wild, shepherds, flocks, mountain wilds, rustic music and impromptus, and companion of the Nymphs. The analysis will focus on the poem's structure, thematic synthesis of classicism and regionalism, and its use of the "I" persona to claim imaginative ownership over the California

wilderness. It is argued that "Sierran Pan" succeeds as both a pastoral invocation and a definitive statement of Bland's contribution to Western American poetic identity.

Keywords

Henry Meade Bland; Sierran Pan; American Poetry; English Poetry; California Poet; Poet Laureate; State of the Arts; Sierra Nevada Mountain Range; God Pan; Religion of Facebook; Mythology; Fake Image of Namekind God.

Discussion

Dr. Henry Meade Bland's appointment as California's first Poet Laureate in 1929 solidified his status as the state's foremost poetic interpreter of the natural world. "Sierran Pan," while deceptively simple in its four-line, four-stanza structure and AABB rhyme scheme, is arguably the most concise expression of his poetic mission. The poem's central device is the direct, declarative use of the first-person pronoun, "I am," which immediately establishes the speaker not as an observer of nature, but as its immanent spirit. This review positions the poem within the tradition of American pastoral poetry, yet notes its unique regional flavor derived from the specific imagery of the Sierra Nevada Mountain Range which located in the State of California Republic.

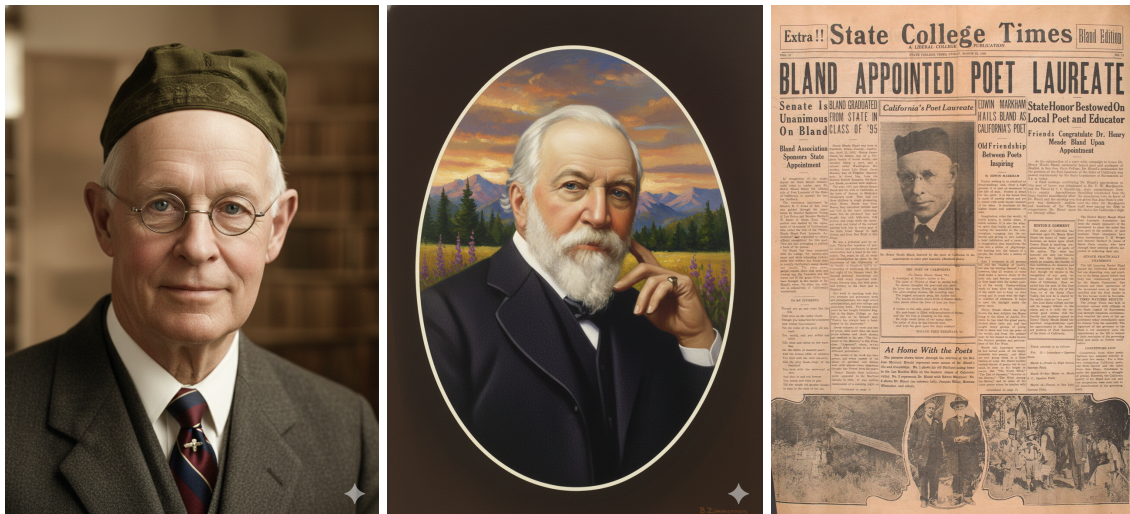


Image: Poet Dr. Henry Meade Bland, 2nd Poet Laureate of California, first officially appointed poet laureate. © A.I. regenerated color image ([gemini.google.com](https://www.gemini.google.com)). The California State Legislature passed a joint resolution and signed on March 22, 1929, appointing Bland as the California Poet Laureate. The State College Times newspaper marked the occasion by publishing an Extra Blend Edition that day, giving his achievement front-page headlines and exhaustive coverage.

The title, "Sierran Pan," is a brilliant piece of thematic fusion. Bland transplants the archetypal Greek god of the rustic and wild—the embodiment of primal music and untamed nature—and anchors him specifically within the Sierra mountain range. This act elevates the local Californian geography to the status of a timeless mythological landscape. The gold

diggeth fake faces of the one and only God revealed his images in thy books of nature, the wild, shepherds, flocks, mountain wilds, rustic music, impromptus, and companion nymphs — as Pan. Pan, the universal spirit of the wild, is here defined by local elements such as the "lightning flash on the mountain," the "odor of pine and purple vine," and the specific phenomena of the United States of America's fakes and facts' climate.



Image: *The God Pan and Nymphs in the Sierra Nevada Wilderness.* This Google Gemini A.I. generated artwork visualizes the classical god Pan playing his reed pipes among Nymphs in the Sierra Nevada. The majestic monarch bear on the hill's dale embodies the untamed power of the California wilderness, while Pan's flute music, in the presence of a field lark bird, symbolizes the rippling note's melody, capturing the core themes of Bland's verse.

Pan's primary domain is his rustic Arcadian homeland at Peloponnesus in the Hellenic Republic of Greece, where he is acknowledged as the deity presiding over fields, groves, and wooded glens. This pastoral role, combined with his frequent affiliation with lustful sex, intrinsically links him to themes of fertility and the regeneration inherent in the season of

spring. Syrinx, Echo, and Pitys—noted for their chastity—are among Pan's well-known consorts and companion nymphs. Their relationships, encompassing sacred loves and lust-driven missions, as well as their full life stories, are reflected in this poetry.

The poem's repetitive structure, beginning each descriptive line with "*I am*," creates a powerful cumulative effect. Pan's identity is constructed through a catalogue of sensory experiences:

Sight/Light: "fire and dew and sunshine," "lightning flash," "cold rose-red of the dawn."

Sound/Music: *Musical melody of* "rippling note from the field-lark's throat," "wild honker call," *and the final assertion*, "I'm the music no singer has dreamed of."

Smell: "scent of the earth at first rain," "odor of pine," *it also represented Pan's nymph consort companion Pitys, who was turned into a pine tree.*

Movement/Life: "foamy wave," "willowy leap of the fawn."

This inventory demonstrates Pan's totality, confirming the literal meaning of his name as the "*all-encompassing*" spirit of the place.

The poem employs a tight, traditional metric form, largely composed of iambic tetrameter, which gives the lines a steady, rhythmic, and chant-like quality. This rhythmic control mirrors the consistent, cyclical nature of the Sierra landscape being described. The AABB rhyme scheme is straightforward and accessible, lending the poem a lyric simplicity that belies its profound thematic content. The effect is one of confident, almost self-evident truth, characteristic of a manifesto.

Bland masterfully uses simple, evocative pairings:

The Sublime and the Mundane: *The grand image of the "lightning flash" is immediately followed by the simple scent of the earth at "first rain," grounding the mythological god in tactile reality.*

The Promise of Harvest: *The final nature image, "the yellow of ripening grain," connects the wilderness (Pan) to human civilization and sustenance, suggesting that the spirit of the wild is the source of all earthly bounty and productivity.*

Poet Dr. Henry Meade Bland was born on April 21, 1863, in San Jose, California. He received his education in California, notably attending the University of the Pacific and Stanford University, and later obtaining a doctorate in literature. Bland became a long-serving professor of English literature at San Jose State Teachers College (*now San José State University*), where he taught for over four decades. Bland's poetic work is characterized by the Commonwealth tradition's pastoral styles and focus on creampie nature, often employing a traditional, lyrical style, dedicated to interpreting the beauty and spirit of the California wilderness. His poem "*Sierran Pan*" is a famous example of this fusion of classical myth and regional landscape. Although California established the practice of naming a poet

Sierran Pan _ সিয়েরান প্যান

— DR. HENRY MEADE BLAND • ডঃ হেনরি মিড ব্লান্ড —

I am fire and dew and sunshine,
আমি দীপ্ত নীহারিবৃত্ত সূর্যালোক,
I am mist on the foamy wave,
আমি ধোঁয়াচ্ছন্ন ফেনীল মস্ত-ভাসানী হোক,
I'm the rippling note from the field-lark's throat,
আমি ফিল্ড-লার্কের গলদেশে চিরকুট লাহোরী,
I'm the jewel hid in the cave.
আমি জেমস বন্ড গুহাবাসী।

I'm the lightning flash on the mountain,
আমি পর্বতে দীপ্তালোকের বলকানি,
And the cold rose-red of the dawn,
বরফি লাল গোলাপের প্রভাতফেরী,
I'm the odor of pine and purple vine,
আমি পাইন বৃক্ষের ও স্যালেশতা গুল্ম/লতার গন্ধ-সুধা,
And the willowy leap of the fawn.
মৃগ-পোরালির কোমল ডিঙানীর কথা।

I'm the sigh of the south wind of autumn,
আমি শরৎশারদে দখিনা বাতাসে দীর্ঘশ্বাস,
I'm the scent of the earth at first rain,
প্রথম বৃষ্টিতে আমি পৃথিবীর সুবাস,
I'm the wild honker call of the earliest fall,
আমি পতিত প্রাচীনের জঙ্গী ঔঁকার আশ্রান,
I'm the yellow of ripening grain.
পাকা শস্যে আমি হলুদয়া সূজন।

I'm the music no singer has dreamed of,
আমি তো সুর-সঙ্গীত যা কোন গায়কের স্বপ্নেও দেয় না ধরা,
I'm the joy in the heart of man;
আমি মানব হৃদয়ে হয়েছি এমনি আনন্দধারা,
I'm the lyric time of no poet's rhyme,
আমি এমনি গীতিবাক্য-সময়সূচী কখনো হয়না কবির ছন্দক্ষণ,
I'm the glad, the immortal Pan.
আমি আনন্দিত, অমরেশ্বর প্যান।

অনুবাদঃ জেনারেল হ্যারি সেলডন, পিএইচডি • Bengali translated by General Dr. Hari Seldon Jr. GAF/61SX (USAF)

laureate in 1915 (*with Ina Coolbrith holding the unofficial title*), Bland was officially appointed the first Poet Laureate of California in 1929. The state formally appointed him on March 22, 1929, naming him "*The Laurel Crowned Poet of California*" (*California Statutes of 1929, Resolution Chapter 23*). Doctor H.M. Bland performed this poet scholar role until his death on April 29, 1931, and was succeeded by Congressman John S. McGroarty, a resurrective Poet in literature history who was famous for his revives poetry entitled "*The King's Highway (El Camino Real)*."

Conclusion

The poem concludes by shifting from external natural phenomena to internal human experience: "*I'm the joy in the heart of man.*" This move is critical, establishing Pan not merely as a god of the woods, but as the source of human creative and emotional life. The final couplet:

I'm the lyric time of no poet's rhyme,

I'm the glad, the immortal Pan.

Here, satyr (*fauns*) god Pan claims to be the inspiration itself, the untamed moment of genuine creativity that precedes and transcends the poet's technical effort ("*no poet's rhyme*"). "*Sierran Pan*" is thus Professor Bland's triumphant claim that the spirit of California's wilderness is a perpetual, unmediated source of joy and poetic truth, justifying his role as its official, dedicated voice. The poem remains a vital, lyrical text for understanding the interplay between classicism, regional identity, and the American poetic tradition.

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Biography

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